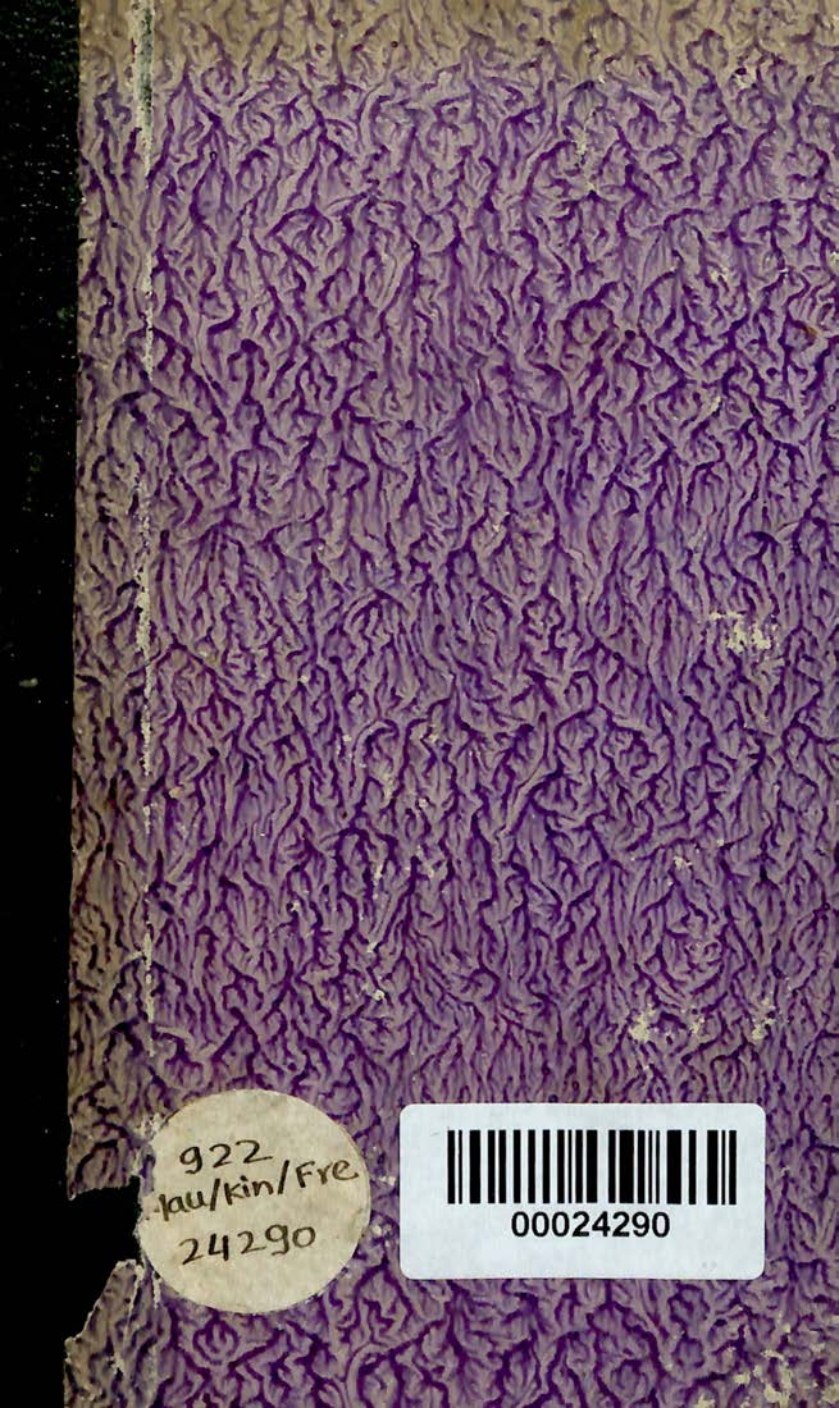
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THE

ASIATIC SOCIETY OF BOMBAY

Town Hall, Bombay.

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on 18 July, 2018

FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

A Sermon

PREACHED IN AID OF THE GIRLS' HOME,
22, CHARLOTTE STREET, PORTLAND PLACE.

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BY CHARLES KINGSLEY,
CANON OF WESTMINSTER.

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FREDERICK DENISON MAURICE.

A SERMON.

MATTHEW v. 8.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

I ASK to-day help for the Girls' Home, a certified industrial school in 22, Charlotte Street, Portland Place, containing now twenty-six children. It was established in 1867 by the late Professor Maurice, whose own words in the matter I must be allowed to quote:—

"Every congregation which meets to worship God and to join in Communion seems pledged to do something for the neighbourhood in which it is placed. The members of the Church of St. Peter's, Vere Street, are better able than many to give this help: but no district is connected with the Church; and those who frequent it have been obliged to seek for work elsewhere.

"It is suggested that they might unite in establishing an Industrial School for Girls not convicted of crime, but liable to fall into vagrant and evil courses. Such a school need not be supported only by their contributions; they could ask pecuniary assistance, as well as counsel, from any friends: but it might be felt as a common bond of interest and fellowship to those who kneel together. Such a school need not withdraw pupils from any other; it might be opened first to a few girls, and might expand as space and income permitted.

"An Industrial School seems to meet the wants of the day better than any other. There is a demand for girls who can do household work. There is a complaint that at ordinary schools they acquire only an imperfect knowledge of books. Where lessons in the business of the housemaid, the parlourmaid, and the cook, and in all kinds of plain needlework, are combined with lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, and in the Scriptures, the last are more prized and better remembered, and the School becomes a better preparation for life."

In these words was this little charity bequeathed as a precious heirloom to all who loved him, by

the most beautiful human soul whom God has ever in his great mercy allowed me, most unworthy, to meet with upon this earth; the man who, of all men whom I have seen, approached nearest to my conception of St. John, the Apostle of Love. Well do I remember, when we were looking together at Leonardo da Vinci's fresco of the Last Supper, his complaining, almost with indignation, of the girlish and sentimental face which the painter, like too many Italians, had given to St. John. I asked him Why? And he answered, with one of those flashes of the highest reason which go deeper into fact and nature than the logic-chopping of a hundred analysts,—"Why? Was not St. John the Apostle of Love? Then in such a world of hate and misery as this, do you not think he had more furrows in his cheeks than all the other apostles?" And I looked upon the furrows in that most delicate and yet most noble face, and knew that he spoke truth —of St. John and of himself likewise; and understood better from that moment what was meant by bearing the sorrows and carrying the infirmities of men.

In this work, as in many another, he showed that vast learning, subtle intellect, lofty and ideal spiri-

tuality were not only compatible with active love for his fellow-creatures, and with practical labour, sometimes of a very simple, even of an irksome kind —not only compatible with them, I say, but their proper fruit and consequence; at least when, as in him, that learning, that intellect, that yearning after a moral and social ideal—a Kingdom of the Father come on earth—were all inspired, and purified, and trained, and utilized by the Holy Spirit of God; and so compelled by a Divine yearning to go forth to seek and save all that were lost. Thus, for him, as nothing was too great, nothing was too small. The outward size and value of matters by which the world judges them were lost to him, because he judged them, as he judged everything, by its moral size, its moral value. Would it do good or harm? Would it make men, women, little children, better or worse? was the only question which (as far as I dare judge of one so much greater than myself) he ever seemed to ask of any matter in earth or heaven, and to ask that question in the very light of that Spirit of God, who works by love.

And, therefore, it is not of his learning that I shall speak to you this morning; though in learning, by which I mean not merely the diligent and

accurate reading of many books, but the power of grasping and understanding them, I never met his equal. Neither shall I speak to you of his intellect, so clear, so keen, so wide-reaching, that it became at times, as I hold, "dark by excess of light"; and men did not understand him, because he took for granted that they understood him too well. His intense and rapid intellectual vision, combined in this, as in all points, with an extreme humility, made him fancy us all as clever as himself; and he was content with describing when he ought in compassion to our ignorance to have named; content with giving us in a single sentence the beginning and the end of a long train of thought, when he ought, in compassion to our stupidity, to have filled up the intervening steps of the ascent, which were to him so easy, to us lower mortals so difficult.

But that learning and that intellect of his waits to be appreciated by future generations, when that idealist philosophy—the old philosophy of the Church of England,—of which he was almost the only champion left, shall have recovered its ascendancy; and when the seed which he has sown shall bear noble fruit; fruit it may be of which he never dreamed, of which it was good for him that he

should not dream, lest the vision of his own posthumous triumph should have disturbed the balance of that exquisite humility in which he lived and died, ready to lament, superfluously, his own uselessness while all around felt his utility, and his own mistakes while all around were learning from him more wisdom than they could put into act and practice.

But so it is, and therefore so it should be. The salt of the earth wins no honour; it exists only to sink into the organisms round it, and preserve them from decay. The lights of the world are little cared for: they only dazzle: and we turn our eyes from them to look at the objects which have become visible by their light. And so the greatest of the earth are not honoured; they spend themselves in making others honourable; they obey that universal law of self-sacrifice, which no man preached more utterly than he of whom I speak; and not only preached, but he lived by it utterly likewise; not only taught self-sacrifice, but sacrificed himself.

This brings me to that part of his character of which I must especially speak, and that is, of his goodness. That is generally recognized. And I am glad to find it so, because it proves that the

religious world is not yet altogether a world, and, as such, given up (as all mere worlds naturally are) to the flesh and the devil, ready to commit the unpardonable sin, and say—"He casteth out devils by the Prince of the Devils; his doctrines are not ours, and therefore his works, however seemingly good, are evil." Not so deep has the religious world yet sunk; for all, however they may differ from Mr. Maurice's conclusions or opinions on this detail or that, agree on this, that he was a good man, one of the best men they ever met; indeed an utterly good man, who therefore desired, as all good men must, to make others good. I have known many who painfully differed from him in doctrine, and who did not appreciate the power of his genius, agree at least to this—that he was at once perhaps the most pious and the most gentlemanlike person whom they had ever met.

The latter excellence was a natural result of the former; for such harmonious grace of inward character was certain to express itself in a corresponding grace of manner. Indeed if that character had a fault, it was this, that his humility was carried to an extreme; that, unaware alike of his own intellectual and his own practical and governing power,

he would submit at times when he ought to have ruled, and listen where he ought to have commanded. Save on one point. Wherever the interests of duty, honour, chivalry, pity, mercy were, or even seemed, in the least at stake, then the humble man became terrible, the docile man uncompromising, and from the gentlest of lips came forth a "Thou shalt not" of noble indignation, even of noble scorn.

It was this intense sense of the infinite difference between right and wrong, this singleness of eye, this purity of heart, which was the very cause of his high theological insight; so that in him were fulfilled the words, the words of my text,—"The pure in heart shall see God." For he saw God, not by calculations of logic, but by the intuition of the higher reason, as the perfectly good Being, who had by the very necessity of His own perfect goodness a perfect hatred of all that was evil, and a perfect desire to deliver all His creatures from that evil at any sacrifice, even at the sacrifice of Himself. He beheld by the eye of that highest reason, which is faith itself, a Divine love, which could not live alone and self-content in the abyss, but went forth eternally to create, to rule, to hear, to help, to save all

who would be saved, to forgive all who would be forgiven. And that same singleness of heart bade him go and do likewise, and copy according to his powers that God whom he had seen revealed in his Lord.

And, therefore, he could not but go forth himself to seek and to save. He could not but throw himself into practical work; and, most of all, into work for those who seemed to him neglected and oppressed, weak and endangered. This was the inspiring cause of his practical chivalry towards women, the inspiring cause of all that he did, or tried to do, for their higher education, their social status, and last, but not least, of this little humble endeavour to send forth a better class of maid-servants into the families of those who felt their need of them. This also he had to do; and he did it, as he did all things, in a simple practical fashion. For as he was no dreamer in philosophy, content with fine words which had no practical bearing on morality, so he was no dreamer on social subjects, content with theories for the reconstruction of the church or of society, which must be carried out—if at all—by schism or revolution. He dared not dream of re-constructing society; for he believed

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that God had constructed it. He taught that the powers that be, whether spiritual, political, or social, were ordained of God; that we must respect them, understand them, use them, develope them, re-form them, if they have been de-formed, but never cast them away, for they are institutions of the Living Kingdom of the Living Christ. So he believed; and therefore he held that he that believeth will not make haste, but be content with the day of small things, and use the tools which God had put ready to his hand, content with getting a little more right done here, and a little more there, by old-fashioned methods and on old-fashioned principles, instead of attempting some vast and daring scheme, and—as he himself phrased it—casting oneself down from the pinnacle of the temple, in vain hopes that God's angels might support one in their hands.

And therefore this little humble attempt to save young girls from degradation, and train them for honest servants was like him, worthy of him, and, as it were, the cycle of his many labours. This also he ought to have done, and, like all he did, he did it well. It has been said that "to those who knew him only as a preacher of deep and abstruse ser-

mons, and a theologian, it may be difficult to conceive him as stooping to be the friend and companion of ignorant children." Yes: but it was his very theology—his knowledge of God—which did not make it difficult for him to do, not difficult to copy that God, who said "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." It was his theology—his very knowledge of God—which made him feel that this work, however lowly it might seem, was, if done well, as important perhaps as any work which he could do. For what more important than to save from degradation any human soul whatsoever? Girls too, who will be mothers; and who, meanwhile, will be servants, and exercising as such, often and too often, a power over their master's children for good or for evil, which is too often more potent than that of parents, governesses, schoolmasters; which may determine the whole future of their lives.

Let—to give a single instance—the nursemaid once teach the child to lie and to conceal: and the most careful religious training may only do fresh harm, rather than benefit; because religious emotions will make the double mind, after deceiving others, ready to deceive itself.

Be sure that if the proverb be true, as is the master, so are the servants; it is equally true, as are the servants, so are the master's children. All will confess this in the case of slaves. I tell you that it is just as true in the case of free hired servants; and to those who have not the same intense personal interest in this institution which many here I believe must have,—I would say, "Support this institution; support any and every institution for training young girls for domestic service, not merely for their sakes, but for your own sakes; and believe that that good man, when he was teaching these little things concerning faith and obedience, truth and purity, was doing his best to bless not those children only, or the children whom they might bring into the world, but whole families of the upper classes, and it may be yours and yours among the rest."

But there are those, and I would fain believe that there are many in this church, to whom this institution is a precious heirloom, left in their charge by one to whom they owe—they know not even themselves how much; an heirloom which they will not forget till they forget him to whom they owe it. Let them be sure that he does not forget it in likewise. That to

whatever high station in the unseen world his royal spirit may be exalted now, his eye is still on that little Home, his prayers go up for it before the throne of God. It may be that he thinks of us; so let us think of him when we offer our alms for the sake of His lambs, and of Christ who died for them. It may be that he thinks of us; so let us think of him when we thank God for all His servants departed in His faith and fear; and then let us draw near, shamed and yet elevated by the remembrance of a great example, and partake with the Church militant and the Church triumphant, and therefore with him, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, and with angels and archangels, and all the Heavenly host, of the one spiritual and eternal sacrifice which is in Heaven; the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world, who is for ever in the midst of the throne of God, The Life of the world, and of all worlds, past, present, and to come. Amen.

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